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December 11, 2009

Ms. Barbara Lambis, Construction Grant Program Manager
National Institute of Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive, STOP 4701
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-4701

RE: UMaine 2009-NIST-ARRA, Construction Grant Proposal No. 9A00137
Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory"

Dear Ms. Lambis,

I am writing to express my strong support for the University of Maine's proposal seeking NIST American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory submitted under opportunity 2009-NIST-ARRA-CONSTRUCTION-01. The proposed \$12.4 million grant, combined with a State of Maine grant of \$5 Million, will help fund the construction of a leading laboratory in the development of advanced composites for offshore wind energy research.

In October, the Department of Energy awarded an \$8 million grant to the University of Maine to lead an offshore wind consortium called DeepCwind. The DeepCwind consortium includes over 35 private and public entities charged with leading the nation in development of floating deepwater offshore wind technologies. The proposed lab expansion is critical to achieving this goal. Once complete, the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory would be a unique national facility with the capabilities to design, manufacture, and test advanced composites components for offshore wind facilities.

Also, the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory will increase personnel and diversify educational programs, adding 145 faculty, staff and students. The University of Maine's Composites Center has continually delivered on innovations in alternative energy, military safety, transportation, shipping, which has earned it the top awards in composites materials in North America.

Because of the University of Maine's Composites Center's excellence in research and development, and the project's vital role in securing our renewable energy needs, I strongly support its proposal for funding of the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory and urge you to give it every appropriate consideration.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator